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A CATECHISM of CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE



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A CATECHISM OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

(SECOND EDITION)

Imprimatur:

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PREFACE

THE aim in writing this Catechism has been to present the teachings of the Christian Religion to the little ones in a simple way, after the manner of the Gospel. Formal theological definitions are eschewed; the concrete is put for the abstract; an effort is made to suggest the truth by means of an image of something that is familiar; the language is plain and level to the child's capacity. The lessons at the end give a more complete exposition of the matter. The idea is that each several chapter should be learned by heart, and a fuller understanding of the truths contained in it should be gained by a careful reading of the corresponding lesson, under a competent teacher. A judicious selection from the first eight chapters and last nine may be made with the view of preparing children for First Communion.

The writer is indebted to the Archbishop of Toronto for much, if not all, of what is best in this book. It has been already done into Spanish, and is used in South America.

The Lord's Prayer

PRAYERS

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

The Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace! the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholie Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Confiteor

I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary, ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the Saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I beseech blessed Mary, ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and all the Saints, to pray to the Lord our God for me.

May the Almighty God have mercy on me, and forgive me my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant me pardon, absolution, and remission of all my sins. Amen.

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An Act of Faith

O my God! I firmly believe that Thou art one God in three Divine persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; I believe that the Son became man, and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because Thou hast revealed them, who canst neither deceive nor be deceived.

An Act of Hope

O my God! relying on Thy infinite goodness and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of Thy grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer.

An Act of Love

O my God! I love Thee above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because Thou art all-good and worthy of all love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of Thee. I forgive all who have injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured.

An Act of Contrition

O my God! I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life.

The Blessing Before Meals

+ Bless us, O Lord! and these Thy gifts, which of Thy bounty we are about to receive, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Grace After Meals

+ We give Thee thanks, Almighty God, for all Thy benefits, who livest and reignest for ever and ever. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

The Manner in which a Lay Person is to Baptize

in Case of Necessity

Pour common water on the head or face of the person to be baptized, and say while pouring:

“I baptize thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

N.B.—Any person of either sex who has reached the use of reason can baptize in case of necessity.

A CATECHISM OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

CHAPTER I.

Our Teacher

Q. What is Christian Doctrine? A. The doctrine or teaching of Jesus Christ?

Q. Who is Jesus Christ? A. The only Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary.

Q. Where was He born? A. At Bethlehem, near Jerusalem.

Q. When? A. More than nineteen hundred years ago.

Q. What did He tell us about Himself? A. He told us that He came from the Father in Heaven to be to us "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

CHAPTER II.

The Blessed Trinity

Q. How do we become children of our Father in Heaven? A. By baptism.

Q. In whose Name are we baptized? A. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Q. Is the Father God? A. Yes; the Father is God.

Q. Is the Son God? A. Yes; the Son is God.

Q. Is the Holy Ghost God? A. Yes, the Holy Ghost is God.

Q. Are they three Gods? A. No; they are three Persons in One God.

Q. How do you call the three Divine Persons in One God? A. The Blessed Trinity.

CHAPTER III.

God

Q. Who is God? A. The Supreme Being.

Q. Had God a Beginning? A. No; He always was and always will be.

Q. Where is God? A. God is everywhere, here on earth and far away beyond the stars.

Q. Can we see God? A. No, not in this life.

Q. Why? A. Because He is a Spirit, and the eyes of the body cannot see Him.

Q. When shall we see God? A. When we die, we shall see Him in Heaven.

Q. Is God good? A. Yes; He is good Himself, and good to us.

Q. Does God hate anything? A. God hates only sin.

CHAPTER IV.

God the Father

Q. Who made the world? A. God the Father Almighty.

Q. What do you mean by the world? A. Everything that is, except God Himself.

Q. How did God make man? A. He made man's body out of the earth, and created the soul in His own image and likeness.

Q. How is the soul like God? A. The soul thinks, and is free, and will live forever.

Q. Did God make any other being that can think?
A. Yes; the Angels.

Q. What are angels? A. They are spirits like our souls, but without bodies.

Q. Are they all good? A. No; some of them turned against God, as men on earth do now.

Q. Where are the bad angels? A. In Hell.

Q. Where are the good angels? A. In Heaven.

CHAPTER V.

Our First Parents

Q. Who were our first parents? A. Adam and Eve, the first man and woman.

Q. Where did God place Adam and Eve? A. In the garden of Eden.

Q. Did they pass their whole life there? A. No; they were driven out.

Q. Why were they driven out? A. Because they sinned against God by eating of the forbidden fruit.

Q. What do we call the sin of Adam and Eve?
A. Original sin.

Q. What happened to us on account of the sin of our first parents? A. We have been all born in sin.

CHAPTER VI.

Sin

Q. What is the sin called which we commit ourselves?
A. Actual sin.

Q. What is actual sin? A. Any wilful thought, word, deed, or omission contrary to the law of God.

Q. What is omission? A. Not doing what we ought to do.

Q. What are the greater sins called? A. Mortal sins, because they kill the life of grace in the soul.

Q. What are the lesser sins called? A. Venial sins, because they are more easily forgiven.

Q. Can sinners be saved? A. Yes, if they are willing to do what God tells them.

Q. Would God forgive the greatest sinner that ever lived?
A. Yes, if he were sorry for his sins and turned away from them.

Q. What does God say? A. "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow." (Is. 1:18.)

Q. Will all sinners be saved then? A. No, many die in their sins.

Q. Why? A. Because they do not repent, and as a rule men die as they live.

CHAPTER VII.

God the Son

Q. Can we by ourselves get rid of our sins? A. No; we are quite helpless.

Q. Who can help us? A. Only God.

Q. How does God help us? A. Through His only Son whom He sent into the world to become man.

Q. Did we deserve this? A. No; God took pity on us.

Q. What is the name of the Son of God made man?
A. Jesus Christ.

Q. What does the name Jesus mean? A. One who saves from sin; Saviour or Redeemer.

Q. What does Christ mean? A. Anointed.

Q. Who used to be anointed? A. Priests, prophets, and kings.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Holy Family

Q. Who was the holy man that watched over Jesus and His Blessed Mother? A. St. Joseph, a carpenter.

Q. Was he the father of Jesus? A. No; Jesus Christ has only one Father, God.

Q. Where was He before He became man? A. He was in Heaven.

Q. How did He become man? A. He was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary.

Q. Is Jesus Christ two persons, God and man? A. No; He is one Person, but He has two natures, the nature of God and the nature of man.

Q. Is the Virgin Mary the Mother of this Divine Person?
A. Yes; she is Mother of God the Son, and she is Mother to all who are children of God.

CHAPTER IX.

Jesus Christ as King

Q. How do we speak of Jesus Christ as King? A. We call Him our Lord.

Q. What did our Lord do as King? A. He founded a new people of God (Acts xv. 14).

Q. Who were God's people before the coming of our Lord? A. The Jews.

Q. How do you name the new People of God? A. The Catholic Church.

Q. What is the Catholic Church called in Scripture?

A. The Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, the Body of Christ.

Q. What are the marks of Christ's Kingdom? A. It is one; it is holy; it is Catholic; it is Apostolic.

Q. Whom did our Lord make the first rulers of His Kingdom or Church? A. The twelve Apostles.

Q. What power did He give them? A. Power to bind and to loose; power to make and unmake laws; power to teach all nations.

Q. Did our Lord make all the Apostles equal? A. No; He named Peter to act for Him as Head of the Church.

Q. What do we call a man who acts for an absent King? A. A viceroy or vicar.

Q. Who succeeds St. Peter as Vicar of Christ? A. The Pope, or Bishop of Rome.

Q. Why? A. Because St. Peter lived and died as Bishop of Rome.

CHAPTER X.

Jesus Christ as Priest

Q. What is a priest? A. One who offers sacrifice to God for the people.

Q. What does a priest offer in sacrifice? A. A victim.

Q. What is a victim? A. A victim is that which is slain in sacrifice.

Q. Which was the chief victim in the Old Law? A. A spotless lamb.

Q. What was this lamb a type or figure of? A. It was a type of Our Lord, who is called the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world (Jno. 1:29).

Q. When did our Lord take away the sins of the world? A. When He died a victim for sin on the Cross.

Q. Is the Sacrifice of the Cross done and over? A. No: Jesus Christ is "a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec."

Q. Who was Melchisedec? A. A king and priest who offered sacrifices in bread and wine.

CHAPTER XI.

The Holy Mass

Q. How is our Lord priest forever after the order of Melchisedec? A. He is forever offering sacrifice under the forms of bread and wine.

Q. When did He make the offering of Himself? A. At the Last Supper.

Q. Where was He slain in sacrifice? A. On Calvary.

Q. Where does He offer His sacrifice now? A. On the altar, by the hands of His priests.

Q. What do you call this Sacrifice? A. The Holy Mass.

Q. Is the Mass the same as the Sacrifice of the Cross? A. Yes: the Priest is the same, the Victim is the same, and the Action is the same.

Q. What do you mean by the Action? A. The act of offering in the consecration.

Q. Whose is this act? A. It is our Lord's act, and it changes the bread and wine into His Body and Blood.

Q. Do the words show that it is our Lord's act? A. Yes: they are our Lord's own words: "This is My Body: This is My Blood."

Q. What does St. Paul say about the Mass? A. He says

it "shows forth the death of the Lord until He come," at the end of the world.

CHAPTER XII.

Jesus Christ as Prophet

Q. What is a prophet? A. A prophet is one who teaches truth, and foretells the future.

Q. Did our Lord foretell the future? A. Yes; He foretold the manner of His death, His rising from the dead, the downfall of Jerusalem, and many other things.

Q. How does He teach us the Christian religion?

A. Through His Church.

Q. What help did He promise the teachers of the Church?

A. He promised to be with them all days, even to the end of the world (Matt. 28).

Q. Who were the first teachers of the Church? A. The Apostles.

Q. Who have taken their place? A. The Bishops of the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER XIII.

God the Holy Ghost

Q. Who is the Holy Ghost? A. The Spirit of the Father and the Son.

Q. Why was the Holy Spirit sent down upon the Apostles? A. To be the Teacher of truth and the Giver of grace to men.

Q. Where is the sum of what we have to believe, by the grace of God? A. In the Creed.

Say the Apostles' Creed.

Q. Where is the sum of what we have to do, with the help of God's grace? A. In the commandments of God and of the Church.

Q. What is the first and greatest commandment? A. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

Q. What is the second great commandment? A. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Q. Did our Lord do away with the decalogue or ten commandments given to Moses? A. No; He came not to do away with the law, but to fulfill it.

Q. What is the fulfilment of the law? A. Charity, or the love of God, and of our neighbour.

Say the Ten Commandments.

1. I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have strange gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
3. Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.
4. Honour thy father and thy mother.
5. Thou shalt not kill.
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
7. Thou shalt not steal.
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods.

CHAPTER XIV.

The First Commandment

Q. What is the first commandment of God? A. I am the Lord thy God: thou shalt not have strange gods before me.

Q. What does this mean? A. It means that we are to worship God as the Sovereign Lord of all things.

Q. How many kinds of worship are there? A. Three; private worship, family worship, and public worship.

Q. Mention some acts of private worship? A. Kneeling in prayer, visiting the Blessed Sacrament.

Q. When is there family worship? A. When the members of a family join in the rosary or other prayer in the home.

Q. When is worship public? A. When it is offered by or for all the people in a body.

Q. What is the great act of public worship? A. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Q. May we offer the worship of sacrifice to an angel or a saint? A. No; that would be the sin of idolatry.

Q. Are we forbidden to honour angels and saints? A. No; but we are forbidden to give them divine honour, which belongs to God alone.

Q. May we honour statues and pictures of the saints? A. Yes; just as we honour statues and pictures of great men.

Q. Why do we pray before the crucifix and images of the saints? A. Because they put us in mind of our Lord and of His friends.

CHAPTER XV.

The Second Commandment

Q. What is the second commandment of God? A. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Q. What does this mean? A. It means that we are to honour the Holy Name of God.

Q. What is forbidden by this commandment? A. Taking God's name without reverence, blasphemy, cursing, swearing, perjury, and the breaking of lawful vows.

Q. What is blasphemy? A. Any thought, word, or deed which dishonours God or His Saints.

Q. What is cursing? A. Calling upon God to bring evil upon some one.

Q. What is swearing? A. Calling God to witness the truth of what we say or promise.

Q. May we do this? A. No, unless there is serious reason for it, as when we have to bear witness in a court of justice.

Q. What is perjury? A. The taking of a false oath, or the breaking of a lawful one.

Q. What is a vow? A. A promise made to God.

Q. When is a vow lawful? A. When the thing that we promise is pleasing to God and in our power.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Third Commandment

Q. What is the third commandment of God? A. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

Q. Do we keep the Jewish day of rest? A. No; we keep the first day of the week, Sunday, or the Lord's Day.

Q. Who changed the Jewish Sabbath into Sunday? A. The Catholic Church.

Q. Why? A. Because our Lord rose from the dead and the Holy Ghost came down on that day.

Q. How do you keep the Sunday holy? A. By hearing Mass devoutly, and doing no servile work.

Q. Are any other days kept holy? A. Yes; holy days of obligation.

Q. Which are they in this country? A. They are Christmas, New Year's Day, the Epiphany, Ascension Day, All Saints' and the Immaculate Conception.

Q. What does the Immaculate Conception mean? A. It means that the Blessed Virgin was conceived without original sin.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Fourth Commandment

Q. What is the fourth commandment of God? A. Honour thy father and thy mother.

Q. What does it bid you do? A. Honour and obey our parents and all who are placed over us.

Q. Why are they to be honoured and obeyed? A. Because towards us they hold the place of God.

Q. Who are over you in the Church? A. The Pope, bishops, and priests.

Q. What did our Lord say to them? A. "He that heareth you heareth me" (Luke 10:16).

Q. Who are placed over you in the State? A. Kings, governors, magistrates, police.

Q. What if those that are over us are bad men? A. We must still obey them, but not follow them to do evil.

Q. What reward does God promise for keeping this commandment? A. A long and happy life.

Q. Is the reward always given in this world? A. No; under the New Law the promises are mainly of happiness in the next world.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Fifth Commandment

Q. What is the fifth commandment of God? A. Thou shalt not kill.

Q. What is forbidden by this commandment? A. All wilful murder, and all fighting, quarrelling, anger, hatred, and revenge.

Q. Must you forgive your enemies? A. Yes, or else God will not forgive us.

Q. What is the sin of killing the soul called? A. Scandal.

Q. What is this? A. Leading others into sin.

Q. Is cruelty to animals a sin? A. Yes; the good man cares for his beast, but the heart of the wicked is cruel (Prov. 12: 10).

CHAPTER XIX.

The Sixth Commandment

Q. What is the sixth commandment of God? A. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Q. What does it forbid? A. All sins against purity in word or deed.

Q. Is impurity a very great sin? A. Yes; and no sin is more shameful.

Q. What must you do to keep yourself pure? A. We must remember that God always sees us, pray to the Blessed Virgin, and shun the occasions of sin.

Q. What are the occasions of this sin? A. Idleness, bad company, bad books and papers, bad dances and plays.

Q. What does our Lord say of those who keep themselves pure? A. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5: 8).

CHAPTER XX.

The Seventh Commandment

Q. What is the seventh commandment of God? A. Thou shalt not steal.

Q. What does it forbid? A. Theft, and all dishonest dealing.

Q. What is theft? A. Taking secretly what belongs to another, without his consent.

Q. What is robbery? A. Taking by force what belongs to another.

Q. What must they do who have ill-gotten goods?

A. They must give them back, or at least the value of them.

Q. What must they do who have injured their neighbour's property? A. They must make good the loss.

Q. Is it a sin to put off payment of what you owe?

A. Yes; we are bound to pay all our debts as soon as we are able.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Eighth Commandment

Q. What is the eighth commandment of God? A. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Q. What does it forbid? A. Thinking ill of our neighbour, lying about him, or robbing him of his good name in any way.

Q. What is a lie? A. Telling what we think to be untrue.

Q. Is it ever lawful to tell a lie? A. No; because a lie is bad in itself.

Q. What must they do who have spoken ill of their neighbour? A. They must try to give him back his good name.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Ninth and Tenth Commandments

Q. What is the ninth commandment of God? **A.** Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.

Q. What is the tenth commandment? **A.** Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods.

Q. What do these commandments forbid? **A.** All thoughts and desires against the sixth and seventh commandments.

Q. Is it a sin to think of sin? **A.** Yes, if we take wilful pleasure in thinking of it.

Q. What kind of a sin is it? **A.** It is the same as the sin we think of.

Q. May you wish or mean to do what is a sin if you don't really do it? **A.** No; this is the sin of bad desire.

Q. Must you confess bad thoughts and bad desires?

A. Yes; just like bad words and bad actions.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Commandments of the Church

Q. Which are the chief commandments of the Church?

A. They are:

1. To hear Mass and rest from servile work on Sundays and holy days of obligation.
2. To fast and abstain from flesh meat on the days fixed by the Church.
3. To go to confession at least once a year.
4. To receive Holy Communion during Easter time.
5. To support our pastors.
6. Not to marry persons who are not Catholics, or who are within the forbidden degrees of kindred.

Q. Do these commandments bind under pain of grievous sin, like the commandments of God? **A.** Yes; but the Church can dispense in certain cases.

Q. From whom has the Church power to make commandments? A. From our Lord, to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28).

Q. When did our Lord give this power? A. When He said to His Apostles: "Whatever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound also in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt. 18:18).

CHAPTER XXIV.

Grace

Q. Can we of ourselves keep the commandments? A. No; and even if we could, that would not save us.

Q. To keep the commandments and be saved, what do we need? A. The grace of God.

Q. What is grace? A. The life of God in us.

Q. Can we all have this life? A. Yes; we must have it or be lost forever.

Q. Can we do anything holy without it? A. No; our Lord says: "Without Me you can do nothing."

Q. How do we get the help of God? A. By prayer: "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. 7:7).

Q. How do we lose the grace of God? A. By mortal sin.

Q. Who gives grace? A. The Holy Ghost, whom our Lord sent to live in the Church forever.

Q. Through what channels does the Holy Ghost give grace? A. Chiefly through the seven sacraments.

Q. Name the seven sacraments? A. Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, the Holy Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony.

CHAPTER XXV.

Baptism

Q. How does one become member of a family? A. By being born into it.

Q. Can one be born twice? A. Yes; there is natural birth, and spiritual birth.

Q. How does one get the spiritual birth? A. By water and the Holy Ghost in baptism.

Q. Into what family is one born by baptism? A. Into the great family of the children of God.

Q. What does baptism do for us? A. It cleanses us from original sin, and makes us children of God and of the Catholic Church.

Q. Can all the effects of baptism be lost by sin? A. All but one. The mark or seal of membership in the Church remains in the soul forever.

Q. Why is water used in baptism? A. Because water puts us in mind of the chief effect of baptism, the cleansing of the soul from all sin.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The New Life

Q. What do you mean by grafting? A. Cutting a branch off one tree and putting it into another.

Q. Why is this done? A. So that it may get the sap of a new life.

Q. Is the Christian religion like a fruit tree? A. Yes, our Lord says: "I am the vine, you are the branches" (Jno. 15:5).

Q. What is the sap of this vine? A. The grace of God.

Q. How is it the sap? A. It flows from Christ, who is the trunk, into the members of His Church, who are the branches.

Q. What are the first fruits of grace in the soul?..

A. Faith, hope, and charity.

Q. What is faith? A. Faith is firm belief in the truths that God has revealed and the Church teaches.

Q. What is hope? A. Hope is firm trust that God will give us eternal life.

Q. What is charity? A. Charity is the love of God above all things for His own sake, and of our neighbour as ourselves for God's sake.

Q. Can a little child have faith, hope, and charity?

A. Yes; just as a little child has the power of reason, though not the use of it.

Q. Can faith, hope and charity be lost? A. Yes; faith is lost by heresy or infidelity, hope by despair, charity by any mortal sin.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Penance

Q. If the life got in baptism be lost, can one get it back again? A. Yes, through the sacrament of penance.

Q. What is the sacrament of penance commonly called? A. Confession.

Q. How should you prepare for confession? A. First by praying for God's help, and then calling to mind our sins of thought, desire, word, deed, or omission.

Q. Is it enough to tell your sins to the priest? A. No, we must be sorry for them, and make up our minds never to commit them again.

Q. Why should you be sorry for sin? A. Because sin offends God who is so good, and because sin made the Son of God die on the Cross.

Q. Would it do to be sorry because by sin you lose heaven and deserve the pains of hell? A. It is not so good a sorrow, but it will do in confession.

Q. Is there need of anything else to get the pardon of your sins? A. Yes; we must be willing to do the penance the priest gives.

Q. What if you should not do it afterwards? A. The confession would be good, but you would have to tell in the next confession that you did not do the penance.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Healing the Soul

Q. What is the sickness and death of the soul? A. Sin.

Q. Who is it that heals the soul? A. The priest who hears confession.

Q. From whom has he power to heal the soul? A. From our Lord, who said: "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained."

Q. Could a physician heal a man if he would not tell what was the matter with him? A. No; he would not know how to treat him.

Q. Must you tell all your sins to the priest? A. Yes, at least every mortal sin, and the number of times one has fallen into the sin.

Q. What if you kept back one mortal sin? A. It would be telling a lie to the Holy Ghost, and none of the other sins would be forgiven.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Holy Eucharist

Q. Could you live and grow and work without food?

A. No; we should soon die.

Q. What is the food of the soul? A. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Q. What does He say of this food Himself? A. "The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

Q. When did He give His flesh as bread? A. At the Last Supper, when He took bread, blessed it, and said: "This is My Body."

Q. Is the bread changed into His Body? A. Yes; in the Holy Mass the bread is changed into His Body, but the appearances remain.

Q. What are the appearances? A. The outward form, colour, taste, and whatever appears to the senses.

CHAPTER XXX.

Holy Communion

Q. What is Holy Communion? A. Receiving our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

Q. How often must you receive? A. At least once a year, during the Easter time.

Q. Is it a grievous sin not to perform the Easter duty? A. Yes; and it makes one liable to be cut off from the Church.

Q. Is it enough to go to Communion once a year? A. No, if we really wish to be good and make sure of gaining heaven.

Q. How often should we go, then? A. At least every month. It is well to go every week, and better still to go every day.

Q. How do you receive Holy Communion worthily? A. We must be free at least from mortal sin, and be fasting from midnight.

Q. What good is there in Holy Communion? A. It does for the soul what bread does for the body.

Q. What is that? A. Keeps life in it; strengthens it, and makes it grow.

Q. What should you do after receiving? A. Give a quarter of an hour, or at least ten minutes, to prayer and thanksgiving.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Other Four Sacraments

Q. What is Confirmation? A. It is the sacrament which gives us the Holy Ghost to make us good Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Q. What is Extreme Unction? A. It is the anointing of those who are in danger of death from sickness.

Q. What is Holy Orders? A. It is the sacrament which gives priests and bishops to the Church.

Q. What is Matrimony? A. It is the sacrament which makes a Christian man and woman husband and wife.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Feasts of the Church

Q. When especially should we frequent the sacraments? A. On the feasts of the Church.

Q. What are feasts of the Church? Days kept in honour of God, the Blessed Virgin, the Angels, and the Saints.

Q. Which are the chief feasts? Christmas, New Year, Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost, the Ascension, Corpus Christi, the Assumption, All Saints, and the Immaculate Conception.

Q. What special purpose do these feasts serve? A. They serve to lift up our minds and hearts to God, and make us think of our last end.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Our Last End

Q. Why did God make you? A. To love and serve Him here on earth, and be happy with Him forever in heaven.

Q. Should you think often of this? A. Yes; the Holy Ghost says: "Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin."

Q. What is the end of life on this earth? A. Death.

Q. What comes after death? A. The judgment.

Q. If a man does not in this world satisfy for his sins, or dies in venial sin, where will his soul go? A. To purgatory, where it will suffer for a time.

Q. What is the last day? A. The day of general judgment.

Q. Where shall men go after rising from the dead on the last day? A. Either to heaven or to hell.

Q. What is hell? A. It is everlasting death; it is a place of outer darkness where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.

Q. What is heaven? A. It is everlasting life; it is the city of God in the skies, joyous and beautiful beyond the dreams of men.

Q. Say the wisest of all sayings. A. "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world if he lose his own soul?"

LESSONS

Lesson First

To teach is to tell us what we did not know before. God sent His only Son into the world to tell us about the home that He has for us in Heaven, and how we are to get there. When a man comes from a strange land, and tells us about the things that are there, we believe him. Much more should we believe our Lord, who is the truth itself, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, when He tells us about the things of the Kingdom of His Father. We begin the Catechism with an act of faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Son of the Virgin Mary, who came to teach and to save us. Faith is a gift of God. We could never have got it if He had not given it to us. We should thank God on our knees every day of our lives for the great gift of the true faith.

Lesson Second

The three Persons of the Blessed Trinity have one Name, and that is God. They are but one God. They have one and the same divine nature. The Father is the First Person, the Son the Second Person, the Holy Ghost the Third Person. The Son is born of the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. The three Persons are equal in all things. How there can be three Persons in one God is a mystery, i.e., something we cannot explain. Our own life is full of mystery. We cannot understand how we came into the world. There is a mystery even in the beating of our hearts. It is not strange, then, that there should be much in the life of God that we cannot explain.

Lesson Third

God is the Supreme Being. All things have their being from Him. Some creatures, such as plants, animals, and men have life. God is life itself, and He gives life to everything that lives. He is goodness itself, the source and infinite ocean from which all goodness flows. God is the sun of our souls. As long as the soul is in the body it can only see with the eyes of the body, and the eyes of the body can only see the sun that rises and sets. What a poor world this would be if there were no sun! Everything would die. So without God the soul dies. Not to see God in the other world is to die forever. It is eternal death; it is hell, the place of outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. How careful we ought to be to to keep our souls free from sin lest we miss the vision of God and be cast into the outer darkness!

Lesson Fourth

“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.” These are the words of the Apostles’ Creed. God made the world out of nothing by His Word only. The Word of God is His Son, “and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” He who made us by the Word who is His Son brought us out of the bondage of sin by this Word made flesh, giving us “power to become children of God” and heirs of heaven. When the angels fell there was no Saviour for them. There was no bringing them back to God, so fixed was their will in evil. The leader of the fallen angels is Lucifer, also called Satan. Pride led to his fall; he wanted to be equal to God and to set up his throne against God “on the sides of the north.” He said: “I will not obey,” and in that moment he fell like lightning from heaven. Be on your guard against pride, and obey those whom God has placed over you. Be humble, as our Lord was humble and obedient, and the devil will have no power over you.

Lesson Fifth

God placed our first parents in a garden of delights, known as the earthly paradise. They had everything they could wish for, and were very happy. God wanted them to obey Him, and not be like the bad angel who said "I will not obey." So He told them they could eat of all the fruit that was in the garden except the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If they ate of that fruit, they should surely die. Satan envied them their happiness, and taking the form of a serpent tempted them to eat the forbidden fruit, saying: "You shall not die, but shall be like God, knowing good and evil." Eve, our first mother, deceived by these words of the devil, ate of the fruit, and gave some of it to Adam, who also ate. Then their eyes were opened. Before they knew good only; now they knew evil, that is, sin. Stripped of the grace of God, they saw themselves to be naked, and were ashamed. God drove them out of the garden, and set His angel at the gate with a fiery sword to keep them from ever coming back again. It was a good thing to know good only; it is a bad thing to know good and evil, as we, too, know to our cost.

Lesson Sixth

The sin of our first parents is called original sin because it goes back to the origin of our race and is the origin or first source of all evil. Of all evils in the world sin is far the worst. Because of sin there is death; because of sin there is sickness; because of sin there is sorrow, which is sickness of the soul. Mortal sin takes away the grace of God which is the life of the soul. It strikes the soul dead. The one who commits it rebels against God, sets Him at defiance, tramples under foot His holy law. But God is not mocked. "What things a man shall sow those shall he reap." Shun sin as the most deadly enemy of your soul. Venial sin does not take away the life of the soul, but after mortal sin it is the

greatest evil in the world. The way to be freed from sin is to go to confession. The way to keep free from sin is to go to confession often.

Lesson Seventh

God our Father so loved us as to send His only Son into the world to save us from our sins. The night He was born in Bethlehem angels sang "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." Shepherds, who were keeping the night watches over their sheep near Bethlehem, were the first to come and adore the Infant Saviour. "They came in haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Child lying in a manger." The next to come were the Magi, or wise men from the East, who brought gifts of gold, incense, and myrrh. Then Herod sought the Child that he might put him to death, but an angel had warned Joseph to take the Mother and Child and fly with them into Egypt. After their return they dwelt in Nazareth, the home of Mary and Joseph. Here our Lord lived till He was thirty years old, setting to children an example of obedience for all time to come. When about thirty years of age, He was baptized by John in the Jordan, and began to preach the Gospel. He worked many miracles, even raising the dead to life. But many of the Jews did not believe in Him. They were jealous of Him, and caused Him to be put to death. He rose again the third day, as He had foretold, and after forty days went up into heaven, whence He shall come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. Jesus Christ is our Model, our Teacher, and our Saviour. "I am," he tells us Himself, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

Lesson Eighth

There can be only one true religion because there is only one God. There can be only one Kingdom of God, because there is only one King of kings, our Lord. There can be only one true Church, because the Church is the Kingdom

of God on earth. The Apostles, who were the first pastors of the Church, preached the same Gospel and set up the same religion in every land. That Gospel is the Gospel of Christ; that religion is the Catholic religion. The word Catholic means universal, i.e., one and the same everywhere and always. Our Lord tells us that every kingdom divided against itself shall fall. So His Kingdom is not divided against itself, or else it, too, would fall. He has set up His Kingdom or Church upon a Rock, and the gates of hell, He tells us, shall not prevail against it. The greatest of all blessings is to belong to Christ's Kingdom, to be a member of the Catholic Church. Millions have laid down their lives rather than give up the faith that made them Catholics. You may not be called on to do this. But you are called on to live for the faith that makes you a Catholic, and live up to it. The worst enemy of the Catholic Church is the bad Catholic.

Lesson Ninth

The greatest thing in the world is the Mass. Through it the work of redemption, the work of ransoming souls from the captivity of sin, is evermore carried on. By the mouth of the prophet Malachy God foretold the Mass as the clean oblation that should be offered up among the Gentiles from the rising of the sun to its going down. The Mass is the Christian Passover, "for Christ our Pasch is slain." At the bidding of God the Jews offered a lamb in sacrifice and ate the flesh with unleavened bread. The first Christian Passover was not the Last Supper alone, for our Lord who is the Lamb of God, was not yet slain; nor was it Calvary alone, for the Lamb of God who was there slain was not there given as food for the soul in the form of unleavened bread. The first Christian Passover was the Last Supper and Calvary together. The Last Supper and Calvary together make one sacrifice, which is prolonged or kept up evermore in the Mass, where our Lord offers Himself to God under the form

of unleavened bread and is given as food to the people. Try to hear Mass every day. In hearing Mass think that the same thing is being done on the altar that was done at the Last Supper and on Calvary. Pray God earnestly that you may share in the fruits of this wonderful sacrifice.

Lesson Tenth

“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” So says St. Paul, and he says, too: “How can they preach unless they be sent?” Our Lord sent His Apostles to teach and to baptize all nations, and said He should be with them, teaching and baptizing all nations, till the end of time. “As the Father hath sent me,” He said, “I send you.” And as the Apostles were sent by our Lord, so others were sent by the Apostles, and these in their turn sent others still. This sending or mission to preach the Gospel must be Apostolic, i.e., it must be such that it can be traced back to the Apostles, who were the first teachers of the Church and preachers of the Gospel, and who were sent by Christ. It is only in the Catholic Church that the mission can be traced back to the Apostles, just as it is only the Catholic Church that has preached the Gospel to all nations in every age since the days of the Apostles. But there is only one Bishop who is secured against error in teaching, and that is the Pope or Bishop of Rome. He holds the place of Peter, whom our Lord made the Rock of His Church, the Shepherd of all His sheep, the Confirmer of his brethren.

Lesson Eleventh

Before Our Lord went up into heaven from the Mount of Olives He told His disciples to wait in the holy city till they should be “clothed with power from on high.” This power was the Holy Ghost. His coming on Pentecost Sunday was as the rushing of a mighty wind, and He rested upon each one of the Apostles in the form of parted tongues of fire. Our Lord came into the world to teach and to save us. When he left the world and went back to the Father,

He sent His Spirit, His other Self, so to say, to carry on His work of teaching and saving. By the pastors of the Church He teaches us, for our Lord said to them, "He who hears you hears Me." What we are to believe He has summed up for us in the Apostles' Creed. What we have to do is summed up for us in the commandments, and the sum of it all is the love of God and our neighbour. To be saved we have to be freed from sin, to be born again, to put off the old man and put on the new, to walk in newness of life, and this new life of grace, the Holy Ghost gives us through the sacraments. The Holy Ghost dwells in us as in His temple; for the living God, a living temple. "Know ye not," says the Apostle, "that you are the temple of the Holy Ghost?" Your body is the temple of the living God: how careful you should be not to soil it with sin!

Lesson Twelfth

"If you would enter into life," says our Lord, "keep the commandments." To be saved it is not enough to have faith, for "faith without works," as St. James teaches, "is dead." God gave the ten commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai. We must keep all of them, for the same Apostle tells us, "Whosoever shall offend in one shall become guilty of all." The first three commandments set forth our duties to God. The duty we owe to God, as set forth in the first commandment, is to worship Him. To give any creature the supreme worship which is due to God alone is the sin of idolatry. We honour the saints as the friends of God, and we honour the Blessed Virgin as the Mother of God. It is a sin against the first commandment to take part in any religious service other than that of the Catholic Church. We must worship God in the way He wants to be worshipped, and the Church alone can tell us what that way is. It is also a sin against the first commandment to put

faith in fortune-telling, dreams, charms, or foolish signs of any kind. The first commandment bids us know God, believe in God, hope in Him, and love Him above all things.

Lesson Thirteenth

The second commandment forbids all acts that are contrary to the respect that we owe to the holy name of God. God is the Creator and Sovereign Lord of all things. He is the King of kings, and His name is above all names. We should pay the highest honour to His name. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain." This is what God Himself says. We owe special love and honour to the holy name of Jesus, because it is the name not only of our God but of our Saviour as well, who so loved us as to die for us on a cross. The Apostle tells us that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that He is most high in the glory of God the Father. To abuse the holy name of Jesus is a crime and a shame. If we hear anyone do it, we should try to make amends for it by piously calling up His name and praising it.

Lesson Fourteenth

Sunday is the Lord's Day. It is set apart, one day out of the seven, for the worship of God. The great act of public worship is sacrifice. Hence our one great duty on the Lord's Day is to assist at the Lord's Sacrifice, which is the Holy Mass. We must never stay away from Mass, unless there is a serious cause. A serious cause would be if one is sick, if the weather is very bad, if the distance is very great. Besides hearing Mass, we should try to sanctify the Sunday in other ways, by going to Holy Communion, hearing instructions, learning or teaching the catechism, reading good books, assisting at Vespers and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Sunday is also a day of rest. Both man and

beasts need one day of rest in the seven. We are bound to rest from servile work, that is bodily work, such as is usually done for hire. Only works of necessity and charity may be done on Sunday.

Lesson Fifteenth

After God, we owe most to our parents. We are bound to love them, to respect them, to obey them, and to help them when they need our help. In this, as in all things, our Lord set us an example. He was subject to His Virgin Mother and to St. Joseph, though He was their Lord and their God. God will bless the children who honour their parents. On the other hand, we read in Holy Scripture: "Cursed be he that honoureth not his father and mother" (Deut. 28:16). It is our duty also to obey all who rule over us. "Let every soul," says St. Paul, "be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but from God, and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist purchase to themselves damnation" (Rom. 13:1, 2). We should pray for all who have authority over us, whether in the Church or in the State.

Lesson Sixteenth

Murder is one of the sins that cry to heaven for vengeance. It brings the curse of God upon the earth. It springs for the most part from anger, which is allowed to lodge in the heart, and to harden into hate. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old, 'Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment, but I say unto you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment'" (St. Matt. 5:21, 22). Put away from you all feelings of anger as quickly as you can. "Let not the sun set on your anger" (Eph. 4:26). It is a sin against the fifth commandment

to expose oneself to serious danger without good reason; also, to injure one's health by eating or drinking to excess. Drunkenness is a degrading vice, which brings ruin on soul and body. The sure way to guard against drunkenness is not to taste intoxicating drinks.

Lesson Seventeenth

Purity is the angelic virtue. It makes men like the angels of God. There is no telling how much God loves the clean of heart. On the other hand, God hates impurity, and punishes it with hell-fire. Even in this world men suffer for it. Because of it the deluge came upon the earth, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha were wiped out by fire from heaven. This sin saps the health of the body, darkens the mind, weakens the will, and makes one a slave to the devil. There is no other sin that brings so many souls to hell. We have to fight hard against it; shun bad companions, call upon Jesus and Mary when we are tempted, and go often to confession and Holy Communion. Without the grace of God we cannot be pure, and we get His grace through the sacraments. The Blessed Sacrament is called the Bread of Angels, because it fosters in those that receive it the growth of the angelic virtue.

Lesson Eighteenth

Besides theft and robbery there are many other forms of dishonesty, such as charging too much for work done or goods sold, borrowing and not returning, begging under false pretences, taking a bribe either to do one's duty or to neglect it, keeping things found, using false weights and measures, etc. Honesty is the cornerstone of character, and God will not build on any other foundation. We must be honest, not for fear lest we be found out, nor even because we get on better in the long run by being honest, but because God has written the law of honesty in our conscience, and we have to give a strict account to Him. We

have to give Him an account also of the use we make of what is our own. We must not waste nor wantonly spoil even what belongs to ourselves. Extravagance, or the spending of money freely on useless or foolish things, is sinful. Betting and gambling are always dangerous and sometimes are great sins, and lead men to ruin.

Lesson Nineteenth

God is truth itself. As children of God, we must love the truth. Our Lord says of the devil that he is "the father of lies". If we tell lies, we show ourselves to be the children of the devil rather than of God. It is a sin to lie even for fun. Besides being sinful, a lie is mean and cowardly. A person who is known to tell lies loses the respect of everybody; no one cares to make friends with him; no one can trust him. Every kind of lie is bad, but the worst kind of lie is that which hurts others. To say what is false about our neighbour is the sin of calumny. Detraction, or the telling of our neighbour's secret wrongdoing, is also a sin, and a grievous sin if we do grievous hurt to our neighbour. We should always speak of our neighbour with kindness and charity. The Golden Rule is, Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

Lesson Twentieth

All sins begin first in the heart. We must keep a watch over our hearts lest bad thoughts or desires should dwell there. We have to drive bad thoughts away as soon as we can. The ninth commandment forbids all wilful thoughts and desires contrary to holy purity. We cannot help having these thoughts, but we can help giving way to them, and we must banish them quickly. The tenth commandment forbids the desire of getting unjustly what belongs to another, or even longing too much for what belongs to another. Such a longing, wilfully indulged, soon grows into a passion and

often leads one to do what is wrong. It is not wrong to wish to get on well in the world by honest means. But we should learn to be content with our lot, for "godliness with contentment is great gain."

Lesson Twenty-first

To fast is not to take more than one full meal in the day; to abstain is not to eat flesh meat or other kind of food specially forbidden. We are made to fast and abstain that we may mortify our passions and do penance for our sins. Those who are under twenty-one years of age, or over sixty, are not bound to fast, but are bound to abstain. The Church has power to dispense both from fast and abstinence for a reasonable cause. It is only by a good confession and a worthy Communion that we satisfy the third and fourth commandments of the Church. Children are bound to go to confession as soon as they have come to the use of reason, which is generally when they are about seven years of age. They are bound to go to Communion as soon as they are prepared to receive it worthily. Easter time in this country runs from the first Sunday of Lent till Trinity Sunday. The Easter Communion must be received within that time, but the precept of annual confession may be fulfilled any time within the year. We should go to Holy Communion often. Our Holy Father the Pope urges us to go every week, and even every day. We can do nothing better than this, nor as good.

Lesson Twenty-second

All holy people are good, but not all good people are holy. There is a great difference between being holy and being merely good. It is a gift of God that makes the difference. This gift is called sanctifying grace. Good conduct makes this grace grow in us when we have the grace, but good conduct alone cannot give it to us. In the child that is

baptized sanctifying grace is like a seed planted in the ground; in the saint it is like the full-grown plant bearing beautiful fruit. Sanctifying grace dwells in the soul, making it holy and pleasing to God. Actual grace is the help God gives us to do good. "Without Me," our Lord tells us, "you can do nothing." It gives light to the mind and strength to the will, and so enables us to see our duty and to do it. We ask God's grace by prayer; we receive it mainly through the sacraments. Besides the seven sacraments, which give grace by a divine virtue which works in them, there are also sacramentals, or little sacraments. These are rites used by the Church and objects blessed by the Church, to shield us from the power of the evil one and help us to do good. The chief sacramentals are the sign of the cross and holy water, but there are many others, such as beads, medals, crucifixes, and scapulars.

Lesson Twenty-third

If Adam had proved faithful we should all have been born into a state of grace. Now to enter into the state of grace a child has to be born again of water and the Holy Ghost. When our Lord spoke of baptism as a new birth He meant really a new birth, the getting of a new spiritual life. One who has come to the use of reason may get the new spiritual life by an act of charity, or perfect love of God, without baptism of water. This is known as the baptism of desire, because if we truly love God, we desire to keep His law, and so desire to receive baptism. Martyrdom, or death suffered for the faith, may also take the place of baptism of water. This is known as the baptism of blood. In baptism we promise to renounce the devil and all his works and pomps, which means to turn our back on sin and lead a holy life. The name of a saint is given to us that we may have a model to imitate and a patron in heaven to pray for us. When there is danger of death, and a priest cannot

be had, any lay person may and ought to give baptism. This is done by pouring water on the head of the person to be baptized, and saying at the same time, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

Lesson Twenty-fourth

One is guilty of sin who refuses or neglects to do what God commands, or does what God forbids. When a sin kills the spiritual life of divine love in the soul, it is called a mortal sin, just as wounds are said to be mortal when they result in the death of the body. When the sin weakens, but does not kill that spiritual life, it is called a venial sin. It is not always easy to know when a sin is mortal; but whenever we offend God in any important matter we may well fear that the sin is mortal. After the sin is forgiven, there often remains some temporal punishment to be undergone, either in this world or in the next. The penance given in confession helps to wipe out this debt of temporal punishment. Prayer, fasting, and alms-deeds, even when not given as a penance, serve the same purpose, and also indulgences. A plenary indulgence of itself remits the whole of the temporal punishment due to our sins; a partial indulgence remits only a certain part of it. To gain an indulgence we must be in the state of grace, and fulfill the conditions laid down by the Church in each case. In the case of a plenary indulgence, we are usually required to go to confession and Holy Communion, and to pray for the intentions of the Holy Father.

Lesson Twenty-fifth

The Holy Eucharist is the Christian Passover. In the olden time the Israelites ate with unleavened bread the flesh of the lamb that was slain in sacrifice: Christians eat under the form of unleavened bread the flesh of the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world. Our Lord said to His

Apostles: "I dispose to you a Kingdom, that you may sit and drink at my table in my Kingdom." To sit at table with one is always a sign of friendship, and to eat at God's table is a sign of union and friendship with Him and with all who sit at His table. It is only His friends, those who are in the state of grace, that are allowed to eat of this food at His table. St. Paul writes stern words of warning to any who should dare present themselves at God's table without the grace of God in their souls. "Whosoever shall eat this Bread or drink the Chalice unworthily shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that Bread." Holy Communion is the food of the soul. All that other bread does for the body, that and much more this Bread does for the soul. It keeps up the life of the soul; it helps us to grow in goodness and in the grace of God; it makes us strong to fight life's battles as soldiers of Jesus Christ; it sweetens life's trials and comforts us in life and in death. Always prepare well for Holy Communion, and never fail to make your thanksgiving in the Church after receiving.

Lesson Twenty-sixth

The one and only reason why God has put us in this world is that we should know, love, and serve Him, and so save our souls. To serve God is to reign; to love God is truest happiness; to know God is highest wisdom. On the other hand, to make it one's great aim in life to grow rich, or gain worldly honours, or enjoy worldly pleasures, is the greatest folly. Never forget what our Lord tells us of the rich man. His barns were full to bursting, and he said in his own heart that he had much goods laid up for many years, and could take his ease, eat, drink and be merry. But God said to him: "Thou fool, this night they require thy soul of thee, and whose then shall these things be that thou hast gotten? So is he a fool," adds our Lord, "who

layeth up treasures for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12: 16-21). To be rich toward God, we must work for God and with God. We must choose Him and seek Him as our last end in all that we do. Every morning we should offer our work and prayers and sufferings to the Sacred Heart of our Lord, through the most pure Heart of His Mother. Thus we shall turn to profit everything that we do and suffer, and lay up treasures for ourselves in heaven. With God it is the intention that counts. The good intention of working and suffering for Him turns everything into gold. If we have this intention, we are building for eternity a house not made with hands. If we have it not, we are building for time only, like the fool who built his house upon the sand, "and the rain came down, and the floods rose, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof" (Matt. 7: 27).

